TOWN
&
OUNTRY
HURCH

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# "It's Town and Country Time"

OSCAR E. ENGEBRETSON

• In a few minutes the radio on my desk will send forth an assortment of blaring notes accompanied by shouts or shrieks from the group which has taken over the studio for the next fifteen minutes. At the end of this introduction, the master of ceremonies will proudly announce: "It's Town and Country Time!" Then, after a pause, we will be assured that in the next fifteen minutes we will be offered "The best in Country and Folk music."

Following this announcement we will be treated to fifteen minutes of the most unbearable type of music—if it deserves that title. Interspersed throughout the program we will be treated to "humor" and "repartee," delivered with a certain drawl and marked by mispronunciations and grammatical errors.

The saddest part of the whole business is that we are told that this program, which is beamed at folks living in rural areas and villages, is sponsored by the United States Army in conjunction with the local radio station—doing their part as a public service to our communities.

### *Rural Mind and Culture*

One can usually avoid an objectionable radio program but it is not so easy in this case because the broadcast comes at the fifteen-minute interval between a daily religious newscast and the daily news broadcast, both of which are valued and appreciated.

The point that grieves us most is that, since this program is sponsored by none less than the United States Army, it makes clear the prevalent misunderstanding of the culture and life in rural America. There are too many persons who think that people living on farms and in the smaller communities of our land lack cultural appreciation. Hillbilly music and this low type of humor is supposed to be representative of our tastes and likes.

And this misunderstanding is not limited to programs over the radio or TV. The Master of Ceremonies at the County Fair often displays the same ignorance when he attempts to depict the ignorance and provincialism of the rural person who is exposed to the more "refined" and complicated environment of a large city. (If these M.C.'s knew how high a percentage of persons they offended, and how small a fraction of the audience joins in the applause of their efforts, they certainly would be astonished.)

### *The True Picture*

This article is written to formally object to this interpretation, for it does not represent a true picture of Rural America.

(*Continued on Page 2*)

First Congregational Church
Harwich, Massachusetts

## *In This Issue*

Oscar E. Engebretson, pastor of the Trinity utheran Church, Spring Grove, Minnesota, epicts the general misunderstanding of ural life and rural people in America on age 1.

A statement on the celebration of a arvest Festival is printed on Page 2.

The life and poetry of Henry David horeau is interpreted by Dr. Benson Y. andis on Page 5. This is the eleventh in series of articles on American poets to ppear in TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

For excerpts from a statement adopted the Third National Study Conference n the Church and Economic Life, see ages 7-8.

Mrs. H. R. Hackler, a laywoman in the t. Olivet Methodist Church, Taylor, issouri, tells the story of her church in The Key to Survival"—Page 10.

Charles E. Fuller, professor of Theology nd Church History at the Bible College Missouri, gives, on Page 11, "A Theological Statement about the Christian ospel and the Rural Church."

On Page 12, we present a history of Credit Unions among Church Members."

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*No. 117*
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Luoma Photo

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In the more than twenty-five years in which I have had the privilege of serving rural parishes, I have worked in three states: North Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota. In all that time I have never heard any of the people among whom I have lived and worked produce that type of music; nor do they appreciate that type of humor. I believe those who plan and sponsor programs beamed at the rural areas of our land should find out what kind of music rural people love to hear as well as what they produce.

Nearly every high school, even down to the smallest, has a band and a chorus. And what do they play and sing? The bands play marches, overtures, descriptive music; choirs sing anthems, chorales, maybe a number of Negro spirituals and lighter music—but never that which is supposed to be typical of rural people. The fact that when some of our colleges in rural areas present concerts large auditoriums are filled gives more evidence. At the Christmas season, when Handel's *Messiah* is presented, one college has found it necessary to give two performances, and even then the spacious auditorium is taxed. Another college in a small community finds that to accommodate listeners to its Christmas concert it is necessary to present it for three consecutive nights. This is music of the highest and best. It is what people will drive miles and miles to hear.

Even more interesting is to check on the records bought by our youth. No, they do not all buy "classics"—although music stores can attest to the tremendous volume of such bought by teen-agers. They buy "hits" of the day, such as are heard on the program, "Your Hit Parade." That is understandable and a mark of youth. But they do not fill their homes with what we are informed by the United States Army is "the best in Country and Folk Music."

Let us remember that the same programs on radio and TV reach city and country homes alike.

"It is Town and Country Time"—a time to present a true picture of the American farmer. America has a rural culture which is great and good, and one which has a great contribution to make to the nation.

## A Harvest Festival—A Statement

• The celebration of "harvest home" is very old and has a place in the history of many peoples. The maturing harvest has inspired men to expressions of praise and thanksgiving which have found their way into the religious services of all lands and faiths. The great Hebrew festivals had agricultural associations. The Feast of Unleavened Bread in the "month of earing" celebrated the appearance of the ripening ears and the start of the barley harvest; the worshipper brought a sheaf of the new grain in consecration of the first fruits. The Feast of Harvest or Weeks (Pentecost) was the closing festivity of the seven weeks' joy of harvest. The Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles), in the time of the harvest moon, was an autumn holiday, the crowning harvest festival, celebrating the ingathering of fruit, oil and wine.

Primitive folk festivals at harvest time combined with the Hebrew tradition under the auspices of the Christian Church to give England its joyous "Harvest Home," Germany its "Erntedankfest" and Scotland its "Kirn." Pageantry, sports, singing, feasting and the comradeship of master, mistress and workers characterized these occasions and became the social and spiritual expressions of joy at the harvest's end. The Pilgrims kept their day of thanksgiving on the shores of New England with feasting and religious exercises.

Some churches, like the Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite, Moravian and

Brethren, have continued to celebrate "harvest home," but in some other communions this practice has been all but abandoned, or the emphasis has shifted to Thanksgiving Day in late autumn and the remembrance of national blessings, with but minor reference to the bounties of the harvest. This unfortunate trend has produced a nation of town and country churches in whose worship the references to seed-time and harvest are peculiarly lacking. No worship can, without losing vitality, remove itself from the ordinary pursuits of men. It is especially in connection with agriculture, where mystery and providence are so evident, that this needs to be kept in mind.

The Harvest Festival may be held from August to November, but September and October are the most suitable months. It is best to keep it as a special day, apart from homecomings, anniversaries, rally days and annual meetings. Since decorations and offerings play such an important part in this festival, it must be held when suitable produce is available. The flowers, fruits, vegetables and other produce used as decorations and brought as thank-offerings may be given to homes, hospitals and other charitable institutions, or they may be distributed among the sick and needy in the community. Cash offerings for missionary and benevolent purposes should also be received at this time.

The annual Order of Service for a Harvest Festival is now ready for distribution. Designed for use by a congregation, it calls the attention of all communions, rural and urban alike, to the opportunities for religious experience and expression in services of thanksgiving and dedication at the harvest season. This year's leaflet was prepared for the Department of the Town and Country Church by the Rev. Deane Edwards, ordained minister of The Reformed Church, former director of the National Council of Churches' Department of Worship and the Arts, and now president of The Hymn Society of America. The Order of Service may be procured from your denominational home mission board or from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $1.50 for each 100 copies. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

## CROP Film

• A new 16mm 14-minute sound film, "I Saw the Need," has just been announced by National CROP as ready for distribution through the North Carolina CROP office in Durham. This is a filmed report of the distribution of CROP food gifts among hungry people in Asia, The Near East, and Europe. It is a poignant documentation of the need for continued sharing with the destitute refugees and disaster-smitten people of the world who cannot help themselves. The narrator is Wilson O. Radway, CROP Field Director.

"I Saw the Need" may be booked free upon request for showing to church, farm, youth, and civic groups. It is cleared for Television presentation.

## Voorhis on Church's Function

• "It is blasphemy to use the church as an apologist for any man-made economic order. The church cannot align herself with economic systems. But she can and must set economic goals, outline methods, and turn her light of truth on economic evils."

—Jerry Voorhis, to the National Council of Churches' Women's Department Conference, Cleveland, 1955.

Eva Luoma Photo

## The Chairman's Corner

*Rural Festivals—Creative Religion*

• Some Christians have a notion that the church is a place of refuge to which one goes on Sunday to flee from the toil and labors of the work-a-day life. This is an isolated experience from the rest of life. This conception provides for a narrow, unrelated form of religion that is not integrated with the whole of life.

Another, far more wholesome concept is that religion is not a fragment of life but rather that it is an integral part of all the life of a truly religious person. Rural festivals such as Rural Life Sunday and Harvest Festival services offer unlimited opportunities to develop this latter concept.

I have witnessed Rural Life Sunday services in which the traditional pulpit or chancel occupied a secondary position. It was substituted by a measure of black loam top-soil from a field of one of the farm families; a tray of hybrid seed corn from another farmer, along with many other seeds from the farm and home garden; a plow from another, and a bucket of water from yet another. These were the symbols of worship, elements with which everyone in the congregation, young and old, was perfectly familiar. These were the things with which they spent their working hours. They also represented real values in the thinking of the people, for here were the elements out of which came life-giving substance. In these they had hope for a harvest and a more abundant tomorrow. The service of worship which I witnessed exalted these as gifts of God, entrusted to man as a Christian steward. Common things became spiritualized. Here worship was creative, concrete, tangible, and was an integral part of all man's work.

I was at another church on Saturday before the celebration of the Harvest Festival. There was a considerable crowd of men, women and children at the church. They were decorating the church with products from their farms and gardens—corn in the fodder, the best ears of corn, golden pumpkins, wheat, oats, barley, rye, apples, turnips, beans, grapes, canned goods, bread, cakes and pies—all literally filled the front of the church. The children and youth were just as much interested as the adults. When finished it was a work of rural art. Farm life and action filled the church. On Sunday the church was crowded for an all-day meeting. The service of worship exalted these products created on the farms as God's gifts of abundance to good stewards of the soil and crops. Here toil of production was spiritualized; man found himself in intimate fellowship with his God through these things with which he had labored through the week. Religion was not a fragmentary one-day-a-week experience, but all of life as he toiled in the soil producing food for himself and his fellowmen.

Through these and many other such rural life festivals, religion fills life full, giving issue to a faith which fears not sweat, for with it comes the conviction that God will provide.

O God, give us a deep sense of our stewardship. May we labor to cultivate the earth with hope and humility, with enterprise and energy, without grudging and without greed, remembering that by thy hand we and all of life, and the whole earth, were and are created. *Amen.*

—Henry S. Randolph

## Grace for September

• Father, which art in heaven holding our good earth in the hollow of Thine hand, tilt now, ever so gently, this axis from the sun. Our green banners turn to brown of ripening—and then to gold of harvest. And we turn to Thee in praise. Our daily bread is here, and in such plenty that we would share with all Thy children. Now that we have sundered the infinitesimal, and crowd ever closer the secrets of life and death, we need Thee more and more. So tremendous is this power, newly placed by Thee in our hands, but old in the sun, that we must be kind and just and walk humbly with our God. We would harness the atom for peace and not for war, and we ask Thy special blessing on all who say so. *Amen.*

—Samuel R. Guard

## The Gospel According to You

There's a sweet old story translated for men,
But writ in the long, long ago—
The Gospel according to Mark, Luke, and John—
Of Christ and His mission below.

You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,
By deeds that you do, by words that you say.
Men read what you write, whether faithless or true.
Say, what is the gospel according to you?

Men read and admire the Gospel of Christ,
With its love so unfailing and true;
But what do they say, and what do they think
Of the gospel according to you?

'Tis a wonderful story, that gospel of love,
As it shines in the Christ-life divine,
And O, that its truth might be told again
In the story of your life and mine!

Unselfishness mirrors in every scene,
Love blossoms on every sod,
And back from its vision the heart comes to tell
The wonderful goodness of God.

You are writing each day a letter to men;
Take care that the writing is true.
'Tis the only gospel some men will read,
That gospel according to you.

—*Author Unknown.*

## Co-ops Help Mennonites Succeed in Manitoba

• Mennonites in southern Manitoba have built a satisfactory rural community life with the aid of co-operatives, Robert Meyers tells in his new book, *The Spirit of the Post Road: A Story of Self-Help Communities.* The book is published in Altona, Manitoba by D. W. Freisen & Sons ($2.00).

A co-op sunflower oil processing plant has brought better jobs and income, so that rural population has increased in this area, while that of Canada and Manitoba as a whole declined, Meyers reports.

The sunflower has become a major crop. In the same way, a co-op creamery has encouraged dairying.

The whole program of self-help and decentralized industry is built on a solid, educational base. Study groups meet in all the communities. Meyers says these Mennonite farmers of Altona, Gretna, Winkler, and nearby communities have learned the same lesson as Danish farmers—that success depends upon continuous education.

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## Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

## Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

# Henry David Thoreau, Poet

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• The inexhaustible Henry David Thoreau, one of the great men of Concord, Massachusetts, was in his deepest nature a poet. His prose, for which he is most famous, and for which he is granted a place in world literature, is poetic. Thoreau was a self-made, untaught naturalist, a keen observer who contributed to science. But he was poetic when he declined to join a scientific association. He was poetic when he returned with affront the scorn and pity heaped upon him by his townsmen who thought he was only turning up weeds and ballast and carrying them home for some useless purpose.

### *Always the Poet*

He was poetic when at commencement time at Harvard in 1837 he took part in a public conversation or panel on "the commercial spirit," in which he decried a "blind and unlovely love of wealth" which "infuses our thoughts." He was poetic when he said: "We become selfish in our patriotism, selfish in our domestic relations, selfish in our religion." The power of this poetic prose was well illustrated in the famed essay on Civil Disobedience, which a young Indian law student named Gandhi read and later literally applied in the great campaigns to achieve the independence of a sub-continent.

When Emerson was in his last illness he asked, gropingly, "Who was my best friend?" He then answered his own question: "Henry Thoreau." Emerson described well certain qualities that I am here trying to convey, when he wrote of Thoreau: "That oaken strength which I noted whenever he walked or worked, or surveyed woodlots—the same unhesitating hand with which a field laborer accosts a piece of work which I would shun as a waste of strength—Henry shows in his literary task. He has muscle and ventures on and performs feats which I am forced to decline. In reading him I find the same thoughts, the same spirit that is in me; but he takes a step beyond, and illustrates by excellent images that which I have conveyed in a sleepy generalization."

"Give him sunshine and a handful of nuts and he has enough," Channing once observed. Henry Thoreau kept public school for but a fortnight in 1837. Later he taught for a while in a private school that his brother John ran in Concord. There Henry Thoreau taught Louisa Alcott. He had as many trades as he had fingers on his hands. He read a lecture before the Lyceum at Mason's Hall in 1838. He made pencils in 1844 and at intervals for almost twenty years. The pencils were most important. Once when there was a deficit on a book, he sat out to make a thousand dollars worth of pencils in order to pay the printer's bill.

By squatters right he claimed land at Walden Pond, built a cabin there, went to it on July 4, 1845, and stayed until the fall of 1847. He spent $28.12½ on the cabin. He grew his famous beans and sought to live the good life with good means. He was a scholar who sought low-cost living at Walden, and the solitude that enabled him to write the essay on Civil Disobedience and other pieces while in his cabin.

The following lines seem to compress many of his teachings, including his reasons for the sojourn at Walden:

"If I wished a boy to know something of the arts and sciences I would not pursue the common course which is merely to send him into the neighborhood of some professor where anything is preferred and practiced but the art of living. As with our colleges, so with a hundred 'modern improvements,' there is an illusion about them, there is not always a positive advance. The devil goes on exacting compound interest to the last for his early share and numerous succeeding investments in them."

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*Prophet with Little Honor*

Henry Thoreau intimated that there was for him a great Companion. He said that our whole life is "startlingly moral," and that our days are filled with moral decisions. He had an aversion to the institutions of society, but not to all persons. He was an anti-slavery advocate, but joined no societies to advance the cause. He did not participate in a church. He was far more a poet than a stoic, and he simply lived his sense of spiritual adventure. He was a prophet with little honor in home town or elsewhere during his lifetime. Later on the professors of English were to acclaim his contributions to world literature, and to say that he is among few Americans to be in such a category. Many of his writings sell better today than when he struggled in Concord.

His poetry went through a peculiar cycle, somewhat the same as Emerson's own reactions. First Emerson was most enthusiastic, Carl Bode records in his interesting introduction to his *Collected Poems of Henry Thoreau* (Chicago, Packard and Company, 1943). In the strain of an evangelist, Emerson once observed after reading of Thoreau's early poems: "The purest strain, and the loftiest, I think, that has yet pealed from this unpoetic American forest." But when Emerson became one of the editors of *The Dial,* he became objective and rejected much of the poetry of his best friend. Later on, Emerson's attitude was to be so determinative that Thoreau destroyed manuscripts of his poetry because Emerson did not praise them. So with the world's reaction, records Professor Bode. Over a hundred years ago, men of letters praised Thoreau's verse, but by 1900 *Walden* was hailed as great writing throughout the world, the prose was generally acclaimed, and the poems went into obscurity.

*Poems Among Prose*

Thoreau had a habit of inserting his poems at appropriate places in his prose writing, for example, in the *Week* and in his *Journal.* This led some of Thoreau's editors to conclude that his poetry was but an adjunct of his prose. This theory Professor Bode rejects, stating that the poetry was generally written first, and joined with the prose later. The poetry was thus not originally imbedded with the prose.

Professor Bode introduces the Thoreau poems with words that include the following: "The glowing lines and the quiet, the prosaic and the transcendental—they are all here. Almost all have at the very least, the large, astringent force of young genius. Thoreau himself, let it be said, was pleased when his poetry won someone's commendation; but all, surely, that Thoreau would have needed to ask of the reader then or now, a century ago or today, is what his admired Wordsworth asked: 'One request I must make of my reader, which is, that in judging these poems, he would decide by his own feelings genuinely.' "

*Glowing Lines*

The poem "Smoke" concluded with these lines:

Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

The first of these lines was recently inscribed on the stone believed to have been used over Thoreau's fireplace in the cabin at Walden. The exact foundation of the cabin was discovered by Ronald Wells Robbins, in 1948, and modern admirers of Thoreau have erected stout pillars of stone around it.

The first and last stanzas of "From an Aeolian Harp" read as follows:

There is a vale which none hath seen,
Where foot of man has never been,
Such as here lives with toil and strife,
An anxious and a sinful life.

And ever, if you hearken well,
You still may hear its vesper bell,
And tread of high-souled men go by,
Their thoughts conversing with the sky.

The poem "To the Maiden in the East" opened as follows:

Low in the eastern sky
Is set thy glancing eye;
And though its gracious light
Ne'er riseth to my sight,
Yet every star that climbs
Above the gnarled limbs
Of yonder hill
Conveys thy gentle will.

One entitled "Sympathy" includes among the numerous stanzas this one:

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy,
With fitting strain resound ye woods and and fields;
Sorrow is dearer in such case to me
Than all the joys other occasion yields.

"The Inward Morning" is the title of one beginning:

Packed in my mind lie all the clothes which outward nature wears,
And in its fashion's hourly change
It all things else repairs.

The poem "Prayer" is given here in full:

Great God! I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Than that I may not disappoint myself;
That in my action I may soar as high
As I can now discern with this clear eye;

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
That I may greatly disappoint my friends,
Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
They may not dream how thou distinguished me;

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
And my life practice more than my tongue saith;
That my low conduct may not show,
Nor my relenting lines,
That I thy purpose did not know,
Or overrated thy designs.

## Cumberland Presbyterian "Rural Minister of the Year"

• The Reverend Thomas Ballard of Bertram, Texas was selected as the Rural Minister of the Year of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and received an award at the General Assembly which met at Cookeville, Tennessee, June 21-25, 1956.

Mr. Ballard is a graduate of Bethel College, McKenzie, Tennessee. He was ordained by the Dallas Presbytery of the Texas Synod in April, 1951. Before becoming pastor of the Bertram (Texas) church, he served as pastor of Youngs Chapel, Kingston, Tennessee and Hope Chapel of Marshall, Texas.

Under his ministry, the Bertram church has made real progress, both within the fellowship of the church and the community which the church serves. The local session says of Mr. Ballard: "We have worked with him within the church and outside organizations and have found him to be able, energetic, agreeable, and efficient in all his work."

—E. Colvin Baird

# A Message to the Churches

*Excerpts from Statement adopted by the Third National Study Conference on the Church and Economic Life, Pittsburgh, Pa., April 12-15, 1956*

We are entering a new age in the history of mankind. For the first time in human experience it appears possible that enough can be produced to meet the basic needs of man. We may refer to this new period as an age of abundance in contrast with past ages of economic scarcity. The promises of this economy are great but its perils are so real that we cannot evade the challenge which this new age brings to the Christian conscience. To the shallow expression "We never had it so good," the Christian must reply, "We never had such heavy demands upon the Christian conscience. . . ."

I.

. . . In the coming of an economy of abundance we recognize anew the promise of goodness in God's creation. Of such an event we would say, "It is the Lord's doing and is marvelous in our eyes." Yet in the Christian perspective nothing is clearer than the continuance of the fact of sin in the life of man. In every environment and in every historic era man is confronted by the choice whether to seek in humility the will of God in administering the resources God has entrusted to him, or to use the divine gifts of nature and man's genius simply to satisfy his self-centered desires. . . . The warnings of Scripture against the seductions of prosperity are most explicit. If ever there was a time when as a people we needed to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God—that time is now. We may be sure that to whom much has been given of him shall much be required.

II.

(Our) Christian duty cannot be discharged by the mere giving of material goods to those who do not share in the abundance. It must be done in ways which recognize the dignity of each person and each group whom Christians would help. It must be done by the sharing of such knowledge, and assistance in the development of such facilities and institutions, and the creation of such conditions as will enable people to help themselves. It must be done by methods that will call the Christian principle of mutuality into play.

We must recognize the fact that even as we complain of problems of "surplus" there are in our own country large numbers of people who do not share in the general abundance. . . . It is still true that about one-fourth of all United States families have annual incomes of less than $2,000, not nearly enough to sustain a life of health and hope. . . . The Christian conscience in an age of abundance must be troubled until these pockets of want are changed to areas of opportunity. . . . Every barrier . . . must be broken down—whether it be racial discrimination, economic injustice or exploitation, lack of educational opportunity, segregation in the schools, or inadequate development of social institutions which help people to help themselves. From the Christian point of view no one in the United States can be regarded as a second-class citizen.

As we look beyond the borders of our own country we find a world where millions of people are hungry or ill-fed. . . . There are and there will be circumstances where stark suffering or the consequences of disaster justify and require the direct giving of what people need. In such circumstances the giving should be done with no expectation of return, no political strings on the gift, and with mutual respect and regard between the recipient and the giver.

But a more far-reaching Christian act, which will build for better Christian relationships, is assistance to people to help themselves, the sharing not only of things but of knowledge, techniques, methods, and the creative spirit. To this end Christians should support substantial participation . . . in a long-range program of cooperation with the people of other nations. . . . Such programs should include the promotion of mutually advantageous world trade and assistance in the development of the less economically developed countries of the world . . . (using) the agencies of the United Nations as fully as possible.

III.

Progress is not inevitable. . . . In endeavoring to make sure that the abundance we see about us does not prove a false dawn, Christians must choose and support methods of maintaining and increasing that abundance which are consistent with the Christian ethic. They cannot accept the idea that military expenditures are a necessary prop to our economy, but must seek their reduction at the earliest time and to the greatest extent that is consistent with the safety of the free world. Christians should decide now to support constructive substitutes for military expenditures when the latter can be reduced. Among these, besides additional over-seas economic programs, are the expansion of programs for the elimination of slums, the redevelopment of blighted areas, and conservation of neighborhoods in American cities, for the building of hospitals and carrying forward a broad attack on disease, for the maintenance and construction of highways, and for the orderly development of natural resources.

. . . Confronted by our overburdened educational system, Christians must lead the way toward expanding school facilities and providing adequate pay for teachers.

. . . As a consumer, the Christian has choices of profound importance to make. One of these is to spend his income on goods and services which promote human welfare rather than those which are useless or harmful to mankind.

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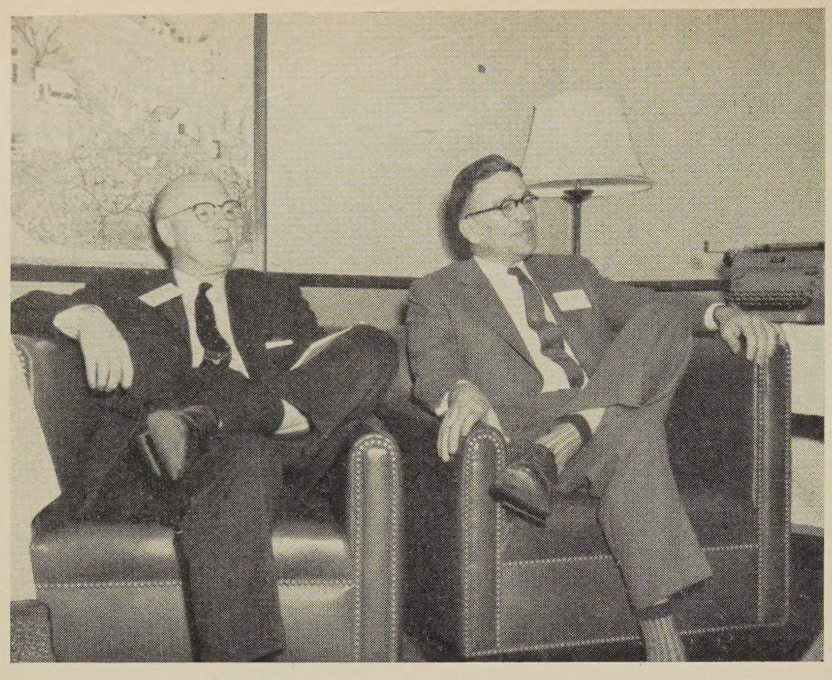

Charles F. Brannan and Charles B. Shuman

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IV.

One of the gravest challenges facing the people of the United States is found in the question, "Can we stand abundance?" If abundance makes us vain, boastful, possessive, or intolerant, our culture, in spite of our Christian inheritance, will go the way of many cultures of the past. . . .

In its teaching function the church should relate to the workings of the economic order the great principles of respect for human dignity, protection of human freedom, securing of justice and good will in human relations. . . . In its prophetic function the church should lay its hand on the body politic and say, "Thou ailest here and here." In its counseling and healing functions it should minister to the integrity of the person, to the healthy unity of body and mind, in an age when life is becoming increasingly specialized and fragmented. In its evangelistic function the church should seek the redemption of the whole man in all his relationships.

Under God, this age of abundance, bringing a rich experience of interdependence to men and nations, can be an age in which the church of Christ undertakes its task with new urgency. For it is preeminently the church that is charged with pointing men to the supreme source of guidance and power in One who said, "I came to save the world."

The message framers, like the entire conference, were a cross section drawn from the nation's major social and economic areas, with laymen outnumbering clergy better than two to one. Among committee laymen were leading spokesmen for government, economics, labor, industry, the farmers and education. Included among them, in addition to theologian Justin Wroe Nixon (chairman) were Charles F. Brannan, former President Truman's secretary of agriculture, and Charles B. Shuman, Chicago head of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

—Reprinted from the *National Council OUTLOOK*

## Have You Moved?

• Please send change of address to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. It takes over a month to effect these changes and we do not want you to miss a copy.

## Religious Radio-Television Workshops

• Religious Broadcast Training Institutes, sponsored by the National Council of Churches' Broadcasting and Film Commission, will be held at the following places during the fall and winter months:

| | |
|---|---|
| September 17-21 | Kentucky one-day institutes |
| October 1- 4 | Adult Workers—Family Life Workshop, Chicago, Ill. |
| October 15 | Roanoke, Virginia |
| November 4- 9 | Charleston, West Virginia |
| November 11-16 | Memphis, Tennessee |
| November 26 | Muscatine, Iowa |
| November 27 | Fort Madison, Iowa |
| November 28 | Ottumwa, Iowa |
| November 29 | Shenandoah, Iowa |
| November 30 | Council Bluffs, Iowa |
| December 6-10 | New York |
| January 27-February 1 | Phoenix, Arizona |
| February 13 | Madison, New Jersey |

In these religious broadcast training workshops one is taught radio writing, television writing, production principles, broadcasting speech, microphone technique, building audiences, broadcasting policy, audience measurement, broadcasting music, equipment orientation, religious newscasting, and devotional programs.

For detailed information regarding these workshops, write to the Broadcasting and Film Commission, National Council of Churches, 220 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N.Y.

## Co-op Wants Cemetery for Living People

• In Denver, Colorado, the First Plymouth Congregational Church, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, the Denver Association of Christian Churches, and the First United Presbyterian Church have organized a housing co-op and asked the city to give them a long-term lease on eight acres of abandoned Mt. Calvary cemetery. On this site, they propose to build 250 homes, especially designed for older people. Small efficiency apartments would rent for $25.50 a month; two-bedroom units for $61 a month.

—From *Cooperative News Service*

## Churches in Review

MARK RICH

• It took a visit to my former parshes in Tompkins County, New York, to impress me with our changing rural society and the new outlook for the rural church.

I first saw these places in 1925. In the larger village, there had been good leadership, the population had held steady and the churches had given faithful service. Of course, there was some nostalgia for the "better days"—but the churches maintained good programs.

In the small village things were different. Five churches had been planted there to serve a population which never arrived. There was no resident minister in the village of 240 persons—no regular program.

In the countryside the churches were also in a feeble condition, and the future seemed no brighter than the present.

### *They Cooperated*

But now, church work is going well. Intelligent, well-trained and consecrated ministers are serving the four churches. How did this new life come about? The answer is, "Cooperation."

In the large village there are two joint young people's groups in the Baptist and Congregational churches. An interchurch council acts as a planning and clearing house for mutual activities. The two churches historically and currently maintain a contact with country churches.

In the small village (once the scene of five churches) an advance through the closing of two churches and the consolidation of three others has resulted in one vigorous, enthusiastic church.

And in the country the Baptist and Congregational churches, four miles apart, have had a decade of experience as one functioning unit and have a full-time resident pastor.

Gradual integration of the church and community life is in process. In the large village there has been a definite cementing of relationships between the churches and the school and between the churches and outlying neighborhoods. When it was deemed wise to close the neighborhood Sunday school and church three miles out of the village, the interested people turned to the village for religious services. That kind of thing was not happening before the village churches reached out a helping hand.

### *Adjustment*

Another factor influencing the new life is that of enlarged constituencies. The large village is industrial. The other communities come within the outer orbit of small cities, seven and fifteen miles distant. So, under the influence of the nonfarm rural population, these communities are experiencing slight population increases. Constituencies are somewhat larger than thirty years ago. Memberships have gone up somewhat. The ratio of people to pews has been improved. Where churches are small an increase of one or two families a year presents a prospect not found in situations that suffer a similar rate of decline.

The present encouraging situation in these communities grows out of a long-time program of adjustment. The attitudes have been reversed. I heard no one talk about the good days as something to go back to. Of course, the churches are not meeting all the needs, but they are on the way. And, if they keep on the way, the next thirty years should witness a maturing of program and service of an even higher order.

A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.

# The Key to Survival*

MRS. H. R. HACKLER

• This is the story of Mt. Olivet, an eighty-four-year-old Methodist church which stands on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, eight miles north of Palmyra, Missouri, and eight miles west of Quincy, Illinois.

Thirty years ago Mt. Olivet formed a circuit with two other open-country churches, but about twenty-five years ago the other two churches closed and the members transferred their memberships to the church in the county-seat town. Some members and denominational leaders felt that Mt. Olivet should be closed, also, but it was kept open by the support of three or four families who were determined that their children should not grow up in a community without a church. Ten years ago Mt. Olivet had a membership of 65, an average Sunday school attendance of 35; the pastor was paid $400 and the total yearly budget was $837. In ten years the membership has doubled and the Sunday school attendance has tripled. We are now paying our pastor six times as much and our total budget is almost nine times as great.

*Spiritual Basis*

What kind of a church can survive in the modern rural community? I believe that many would reply, "The church with a sincerely spiritual foundation." People go to church to seek God.

When our grandfathers courted our grandmothers they went to church because it was the only place they could go, but today there are many places to go and the church that doesn't offer something of lasting satisfaction becomes just another competing organization in our overcrowded lives.

*Growth*

The church that survives is the church that plans to survive and grow. A long-range program should be prepared which is based on the needs of the community. For this a good local church organization is necessary. We have a good organization in our church now, but for many years things were done in a haphazard manner with few people assigned to definite positions. The willing few did everything and were often criticized for trying to "run the church."

An important part of the program should be the cultivation of those members of the community who have remained outside the church. This should be motivated by a compassionate interest in all the people of the area and a desire to render the greatest possible service to the largest number.

*Friendliness*

In planning program and policies the denominational backgrounds of the people in the community should be taken into consideration. While the small town church often has the problem of several churches dividing their community and weakening their Christian influence, most open country churches have just the opposite problem.

Our church, for instance, is the only church in a rather wide area and we have people of many denominational backgrounds. We feel that in this respect our local church has been particularly successful. Mt. Olivet is a Methodist church, but only a small percentage of the people that are members come from a Methodist background. We do not stress denomination, but visit new people in the community, expecting them to attend the church in the community regardless of their denominational affiliations. When they come they receive a friendly welcome and are made to feel a part of us. As soon as possible they are given responsibility. I believe that our little rural church is ready for a "United Church of North America," and we are praying for the day of its accomplishment.

We should also consider the characteristics of rural people. I think the majority of us are conservative, democratic, practical, and somewhat skeptical and hesitant about venturing out on new tasks. (Maybe saying that we are true Missourians and "have to be shown" would cover what I mean when I say that we are often skeptical and hesitant.)

*Leadership*

For a rural church to survive and grow it is important that it have adequate leadership. The rural minister should be a rural minister because he wants to be a rural minister. We need ministers with ability who will stay long enough to accomplish something.

Our church has been fortunate in having ministers whose abilities have far exceeded the salaries we have paid them. Much of the credit for our advancement should go to two women ministers: Mrs. Ray Tomlin and Miss Olive Ellis. Then, about four months ago, we had assigned to us a young man—the Rev. William Bamman—whose abilities, combined with those of his talented wife, leave little to be desired in the way of pastoral leadership.

And we should not forget the importance of lay leadership. We have no people of wealth in our church and very few with what would be termed higher education, but we do have people who place the service of God through their church above every other activity in their lives. One of the ways in which the community as a whole rates a church is by how important it is to its own members.

To survive and grow a church should also have adequate facilities for worship, education and social activities, for a church is limited in its growth by the facilities it has or is willing or able to provide.

*Vision*

As the fifth and final point I would emphasize a missionary vision. The church that thinks only of itself will eventually dry up.

Our church has been weaker in this respect that we would like to be—not because we lacked concern but because home needs have been

* From an address before the Rural Church Institute at Bible College of Missouri, February 1, 1956.

overwhelming. But now we are beginning to do more in the way of missionary giving. We have always given our apportioned amount to world service and other benevolent causes. This year, in addition, the junior department of our Sunday school has taken on the support of a Navajo Indian child; and we have pledged ten per cent of our Lord's Acre project to a missionary cause.

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### Heifers for Relief

• Heifer Project, Inc. has set itself the task of shipping 1,545 cattle, 627 goats, 295 pigs, 2,000 sheep, 168,000 chicks, 2,000 hatching eggs and 130 packages of honey bees to war-devastated or agriculturally underdeveloped areas in 1956.

The goals, described as "the most ambitious program ever attempted" by the intercreedal relief and rehabilitation agency, were approved by its board of directors at the annual meeting.

The board cleared plans for making 1956 shipments to eighteen countries: Austria, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey, the United States and Vietnam.

Heifer Project, formed eleven years ago, acts as the agency for the collection, shipment and distribution abroad of livestock contributed by individuals, church organizations and service clubs in America. The animals and poultry are used to help in the reconstruction of countries whose livestock was depleted by war or to improve breeds in those that never had good livestock.

The agency's activities are guided and directed by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the Brethren Service Commission, the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Koinonia Foundation, Mennonite Central Committee, The Methodist Church, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Rural Life Association, and the department of social welfare of the United Christian (Disciples) Missionary Society.

# A Theological Statement About the Christian Gospel and the Rural Church

CHARLES E. FULLER

• All religion consists of three elements: (1) form or pattern; (2) function or motivation; and (3) object or meaning.

Christianity at its best takes form in dedicating all human activity to satisifying all human need for the sake of and in the power of God whom we know best through Jesus Christ.

The rural minister, expressing what is both truly religious and truly Christian, nevertheless has a special approach to his ministry of the Christian Gospel:

(1) In form, the Gospel must be lived in a whole and balanced experience. This is expressed in emotional life amidst rural surroundings, stimulated where man-made things do not obscure the Divine. It must be thought in noble ideas which enrich and are enriched by the best in town and country life. Christian form must embrace hopes and aspirations arising out of the grass roots of human experience and are tempered by the mind of Christ who directs our desires to higher levels than "bread alone." It will be expressed in deeds and ritual meaningful to the life of rural folk and true to the life and teachings of the "Good Shepherd."

(2) In function, Christianity confronts all human needs, but within the area where people live. Thus the rural minister and church seek to meet such elemental needs as the use and conservation of land and natural resources; problems of mechanization and power; scientific aspects of fertilization, pest regulation and crop control; matters of health, sanitation, and life; education and dissemination of knowledge; social relationships in all groups; questions of morals and values in a secular age; and the requirements of evangelism, missions, and religious education on all levels in all places. No need is exempt from religious treatment where people are concerned about abundant living in the Christian sense.

(3) In object or meaning, Christianity believes in God who is available to everyone everywhere always. God is known to one who marvels at the mysteries of the universe; to those who worship as they work with soil and seed; to persons finding satisfaction in searching out Truth and teaching it; to folk whose faith is fostered in serving their fellowmen in humility and love; to devout and good people devoted to the good life. But His image is seen best of all in Jesus Christ, whose teachings about the Sower of good seed, the Husbandman of the living fruitful vine, the Good Shepherd, the Father of men, and the One sending forth laborers into the harvest (rural concepts), make it easy for rural people to understand God in their own most meaningful terms.

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• One story stubbornly keeps place in my memory. It is of a minister who on meeting a little boy one day asked, "Sonny boy, who made you?"

"Well, to tell you the truth," the little boy replied, "I ain't done yet."

That sharp answer contains a very wise bit of philosophy. The lad realized that he was still on the make. He was growing up. The longer he lived, the more opportunity life would give him. So it should be for every one of us—no matter what be the days of our years. Life can be ever so much more wonderful if we sincerely believe in God, who doeth all things well. He gives grace and glory on an ever-increasing scale as we open to Him our lives and our souls and our minds.

—Reuben K. Youngdahl in *The Secret of Greatness* (Fleming H. Revell Co.)

# Credit Unions Among Church Members

• There are about 20,000 credit unions in North America, with over 9,200,000 members and $2,700,000,000 in total assets. Almost 1,200 of these have been formed among members of local churches. Under the laws of Canada and of the United States, a local church is one of the types of organizations among whose memberships credit unions may be chartered. About 800 of these are in Roman Catholic parishes, about 250 in Protestant congregations, the others among Jews, Buddhist, Eastern churches, etc.

Credit unions may be formed among the employees of one company, or of one teaching staff, or of a library staff, or among the members and employees of a church organization. Experience has taught that credit unions work only among people who associate intimately with one another, or have some face-to-face contacts. It will be seen that the local church, being a fellowship, brings together people who know one another.

The credit union receives deposits from its members in much the same manner as a savings bank, except that in the credit union all deposits are credited toward the purchase of shares, usually $5.00 per unit. Deposits of 25 cents and upward may usually be made. The credit union will also make short-term loans to its members, which must be repaid in systematic instalments, monthly or weekly.

### *The Movement*

The American credit union movement is directly traced to the achievement of a Lutheran layman in Germany over 100 years ago. This layman, Frederick William Raiffeisen, used the term "brotherhood credit" to describe the nature of the institution he was creating. He organized a credit association in Flammersfeld, Germany, when he was mayor there in 1849. Credit unions operate on well-established rules and principles, but the faith that the members of a group have in one another is an important ingredient.

In 1921 there were only 379 credit unions in the United States and Canada. Between 1921 and 1946 over 11,000 were organized. Groups intending to organize may secure either a state or a federal charter. The provisions of each are fixed by the federal or state banking laws. Since 1946 there has been another burst of activity. Most credit unions serve people living in cities, but a considerable number are also formed in rural communities, which are eligible units.

Seven people may incorporate, provided they are part of a larger group. Probably, under modern conditions, there should eventually be about 200 members per organization. There are certain minimum fixed costs in running the organization, so that it is desirable to have a good volume of business to carry the fixed costs.

Most credit unions charge interest on loans of 1 per cent a month. The dividend on shares or savings is often at the rate of 3 per cent a year. The difference gives the margin for expenses. Since the credit union is one type of cooperative, the savings and earnings are returned to members, not to private stockholders.

### *Designed for Low Income People*

The interest rate of 1 per cent a month is lower than that for certain types of loans available to credit union members, but higher than a few of the commercial banks charge on personal loans. Why, then, is a credit union needed, if some banks charge less interest? The answer comes out of long experience: Many people cannot borrow at the commercial banks. Many banks do not offer the same type of loan. Many low-income people cannot do a credit business at banks, and credit unions are especially designed for low income people.

There has been relatively little opposition to credit unions. These organizations gather up the small deposits of people of moderate means or low income, and the credit unions then open bank accounts. Large numbers of industrialists openly and enthusiastically endorse credit unions. So, it is understood, do most labor union leaders.

### *Mutual Aid*

One of the chief advantages of credit unions is that they become tools of education. People learn by doing and the common man actually does, in a limited sense, become his own banker. People associate themselves together for mutual aid—they learn how they can help employees meet emergencies. The credit union becomes a sort of a school in economic democracy.

Loans are made for a great variety of purposes: To meet unusual doctors' bills, to purchase household equipment, to finance travel, to enable the member to have a good vacation, to pay for college education, etc., etc. Credit union committees are not interested in making loans for speculation, and related motives.

The record of repayments is good. Few credit unions fail. The method has been put to the test and been found good.

Here are a few illustrations of credit unions among local churches and employees of church organizations:

In Frankfort, Indiana, the First Christian Church—one of the first credit unions with a Protestant church to receive a federal charter—was begun in 1935. One of the organizers was the minister, the Reverend Allen R. Huber, who later went to the Philippines and helped to organize scores of credit unions there.

In the Salem Reformed Church, Catasauqua, Pa., (Evangelical and Reformed) a packet of materials about Toyohiko Kagawa was studied in 1936. A little later 42 members of the church joined a credit union. The group had learned about Kagawa's interest in cooperative credit, and the appeal of the Japanese evangelist was very practical to them. By September, 1946, there were 143 members.

"You join in order to share," said the organizers of the credit union in the Third United Brethren Church, Decatur, Ill. It was organized in 1935 and had 110 members in 1946.

"The credit union opens up for the minister an entirely new field for personal counseling," the Rev. Ray E. Wilson, a Methodist minister in California has written. He was instrumental in forming a credit union among the ministers within the California Conference of that church.

The lay group or the minister working to explore the organization of a credit union can usually receive aid within a short time. Most states have credit union leagues with small field staffs that will meet with a church group. The Federal Credit Union Bureau, Washington, has practical literature, and a field staff to advise. If you do not know the address of your state credit union league, write to Credit Union National Organization, Madison, Wisconsin, for it, and a list of literature on credit unions. CUNA also will tell you about movies that tell the credit union story. The National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York, publishes a pamphlet, "The Church and Credit Unions," 15 cents. This pamphlet gives stories on the organization of 15 credit unions in their churches. It also quotes resolutions of church bodies.

Although credit unions usually work well, there is nothing automatic about them. They require attention, skill, and devotion on the part of the lay people who are their officers. Generally speaking, the rewards in terms of personal satisfaction are great as people demonstrate practical ways by which they can help each other.

—Benson Y. Landis

## Prayer for a Cooperative Society

• O God, our Great Cooperator, keep our eyes directed to the goals of quality, service and integrity. Teach us that the values we seek for ourselves and our society will come from mutual effort and unselfish enterprise. Help us to keep our cooperatives strong and useful, serving thee as we serve one another. *Amen.*

—Mark Rich

## Announcing

• The publication of a new book, *Town and Country Churches and Family Farming,* by Marshall Harris and Joseph Ackerman. In this 102-page book, which contains many illustrative pictures, two well-known agricultural economists have written a long-time study of the town and country church in its relation to the family farm, emphasizing the close relationship of the farm, family, and church in the U.S.A. They recommend that "every rural church interested in improving the lot of its family farms designate a committee, or a study action group, or an organization existing in the parish, to attack the family farm situation in its own community."

The authors give a good definition of the family farm, review the stress to which it has been subjected, and indicate that the family farms produce most of the food and fiber of the nation. They outline good goals for family farming, and do not minimize the serious problems faced today by those who live on these farms.

Churches are aided by the stability which family farming contributes to rural community life. It takes time for a church to develop a Christian fellowship. Family farming makes for good opportunities for church programs.

These two economists close their work with a "proposed unified program for family farmers." This will differ by regions and by communities, but it should begin with some kind of a local study of the family farm situation. Churches should seek help from government agencies. There is no substitute for the personal interest of pastors.

Churches are challenged to become centers of information on farms for sale and on prospective buyers. County institutes on family farming are outlined. National church agencies are called upon to bestir themselves on the family-farm issue.

Dr. Ackerman is Managing Director of the Farm Foundation. Dr. Harris is on the staff of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

*Town and Country Churches and Family Farming* may be procured from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y., for $1.50 per copy.

The Department of Town and Country Church also publishes a study guide, bearing the same title, for group use. It was prepared by Dr. E. J. Niederfrank, staff member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and sells for 15 cents per copy.

## Heed! Oh White Man

• At a conservation conference of Indians in Oklahoma, a member of one of the tribes was called upon to pray. This is what he said:

"Hear us, oh, Great Spirit in the sky. Our people are very old people. We lived in this land thousands of moons before the White Man came. His way of life differed from ours. For many seasons there was bitter strife between us. Now there is peace but the heart of the Red Man is sad, for the White Man has destroyed many of nature's most bountiful gifts and has forgotten that all things come from Mother Earth and go back to her.

"Oh, Great Spirit, bring to our white brothers the wisdom of nature and knowledge that, if her laws are obeyed, this land will again flourish and the grasses and trees will grow as before. Guide those who through their councils seek to spread the wisdom of their leaders to all people. Heal the raw wounds in the earth and restore our clear and beautiful streams. Bring again the sparkling waters from our springs and restore to our soil the richness which strengthens men's bodies and makes them wise in their councils. Bring to all the knowledge that great cities which are planned live only through the bounty of the good earth beyond their paved streets and towers of stone and steel."

—From the
*Tennessee Market Bulletin*

## To Millet

Upon the plain of Barbizon
You spread your own horizon—
You saw that shepherds were sublime
And herdsmen lived for all of time.

—*Rusticus*

## Easter at Troy, Maine*

• Seven Star Grange No. 73 was very proud on Easter Sunday morning of this year when approximately one hundred persons came to worship in its beautiful remodeled church, a glowing culmination of three years' dreams, hopes, back aches, "dish-pan hands," and aspirations. Easter flowers and plants only added to the gleaming paint and cozy warmth of the completely renovated church edifice.

Since October 1, 1955, twenty-three members and five non-members have worked 849½ hours on the main project of "Opening and repairing the Church," which was divided into five projects: painting the exterior, repairing the foundation, purchasing and installing oil heaters, lowering the ceiling and remodelling the interior.

Past Master Walter Mitchell, ceiling chairman, gave standing timber to be sawed into lumber for the ceiling and paid the saw bill. Five men cut timber, hauled it to the mill and then to the chair factory in Burnham to be kiln dried and back to the church. Eight men installed the ceiling, after lowering it about six feet.

Twelve women, with help from four men, took over the redecoration, and did a complete job. The walls are tropic green; the woodwork and pews are oyster white with mahogany trim.

The ceiling was quite a job in itself as new beams were put in and ceiling strips for the insulated ceiling put up and finally the ceiling put on.

Venetian blinds were installed for all the windows.

$445, including a $100 bequest, was given by fifteen friends, and a War Bond from Seven Star as a memorial to the deceased residents.

All labor and money has been donated, truly a Grange community project.

—Mildred H. Kelley

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* Sequel to the story, "The Grange and Maine Churches," which was published in the October 1955 issue of Town and Country Church.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*My Hospital in the Hills.* By Gordon S. Seagrave. W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., New York. 1955. $3.75.

"There is one joy in this world that can be equaled by no other pleasure with which I am acquainted," says Dr. Seagrave, the famous "Burma Surgeon." "That is the satisfaction of having too much work to do and then going ahead and getting it done anyway." Dr. Seagrave tells in this book the dramatic story of his experiences during the past ten years, since he returned to his hospital in the hills at Namkham after service with General Stillwell's army in World War II. "The desire to serve Burma runs in my blood," he writes. "I am the last of twenty-eight of my family who have spent their lives for Burma."

His compassion for human suffering of every kind is reflected on each page. One receives constant impressions not only of his remarkable medical skill, but of his tremendous vitality and energy. Performing operations all day and then driving a jeep over winding mountain roads all night; dealing with rebel Burmese armies and politicians; rebuilding a hospital and training native nurses; operating or lecturing when so ill with malaria he had to have a hot-water bag bandaged to his back and his body wrapped in blankets—these were all in the daily course of events. Troubles piled up as he was falsely accused of treason and arrested. But after many months of imprisonment, illness, and anxiety, came release! Then back again to the task at Namkham. Perhaps there is a bit too much of surgical language in spots, but a deep concern for and faith in the Burmese people shines through.

As one reads, applications to rural life here and elsewhere come to mind: 1) Many rural communities would welcome a dedicated Christian doctor like this! 2) If nurses who are to serve in rural areas should receive their training in rural surroundings, as Dr. Seagrave believes, perhaps our rural pastors should, also. 3) Dr. Seagrave's example of ready adaptation to the situation at hand is worthy of note. If doctors were not available, he would train nurses; if there was no operating table, a veranda floor would do. Adaptations are needed in many a rural church situation, too! 4) His inter-racial group of nurses—a veritable "Union of Burma in microcosm"—is symbolic of what the church in a rural community may do. 5) And, Oh, if we all loved people like this, how our world would change!

—Clayton A. Pepper

*Doctor Kate.* By Adele Comandini. Rinehart and Company, New York. 1956, $3.75.

• "Angel on Snowshoes" is the subtitle of this arresting biography of Kate Pelham Newcomb, M.D., who has achieved national fame as a country doctor in what is popularly called the cutover area of Northern Wisconsin. As a young woman she had to fight hard to become a physician. She was aided by the fellowship she experienced in a Baptist church in Buffalo.

Doctor Kate practiced in Detroit, and later went to the northwoods to aid her husband who was ill. There a truly rural doctor challenged her to meet human need by practicing once more. She took up the challenge, and won a heart-warming response from rural people and from a nation-wide TV audience which literally sent her millions of pennies for a new hospital which she needed.

Kate Newcomb helped to build a country church for people of all denominations. She has had the abiding love and respect of Roman Catholic sisters who also ran a hospital in her district.

The Lakeland Memorial Hospital and the Boulder Junction Community Church stand as crowning achievements of the career of a brave woman. More enduring still are the appreciations in the hearts of those who have seen a country doctor go through floods and snows to save life.

—Benson Y. Landis

*The 4-H Club Leader's Handbook.* By T. T. Martin. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1956. $3.

This book by T. T. Martin, who pent twenty-six years as State Club Agent in Missouri, places in the ands of leaders an excellent statenent of principles and procedures n 4-H club work.

Mr. Martin has not been content o write a handbook of practical ints for 4-H Club work. Rather, he xamines educational principles vhich he applies to club situations. Dr. C. E. Lively in a foreword decribes it as "the application of some of the better known principles of ocial science to the organization and functioning of 4-H Clubs." The able of contents reflects this arangement with chapters on the philosophy of the 4-H Club movenent, important factors in understanding youth, ways to acquire and apply skills in learning, basic ideas in 4-H Club leadership, the status of 4-H Club organizations, the local evaluation of club work and 4-H Club work "on the beam."

The author relates the principles to practice and each chapter ends with a listing of suggestions for use of the materials in teacher training conferences.

Dr. Martin's analytical method is demonstrated in the chapter on "The Status of the 4-H Club Movement" where he describes the probable cycle of changes in a 4-H Club. The cycle begins with the stimulation which prompts the club into being. There is usually outside assistance in this process but strong local support is necessary.

The second phase is the rise of the club with an enthusiastic drive for members and the organization of the group. The most important stage, the carry-one period follows. The local people are on their own. Differences in outlook show up. Leaders need to watch for danger signals; the changing needs and desires of members, seasonal fluctuations in work, lack of interest in continuing the same kind of program and in the usual entertainment. Elasticity of organization and program is essential.

The final stage, the decline of a club, may be slow or fast. Good leadership senses the early evidences of decline and takes corrective measures.

This book is a valuable aid for anyone working with 4-H Clubs, or with any other kind of youth groups, or for that matter, any group.

—Mark Rich

## Selected Rural Fiction

*(Compiled by Caroline B. Sherman, Former Specialist in Economic Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture)*

*Shad Run.* By Howard Breslin. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York.

Country fisherman ways of living along the upper Hudson River Highlands in post-Revolutionary years provide a lively background for an independent, warm-hearted girl. Enlightening debates over the possible acceptance of the Constitution of the United States and reflections of other political and economic situations are highlights.

*By Sun and Candlelight.* By Patricia Campbell. Macmillan Company, New York.

Of interest primarily for the picture drawn of the Puget Sound wilderness when giving way to sawmills and their people in the late 1890s. Isolation colors the lives of the eastern double-family who owns one of the mills and its hamlet. The unfolding story grows out of the circumstances and their influences. Otherwise it would be improbable.

*Oklahoma Run.* By Alberta W. Constant. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York.

Not only a good historical reflection but a good narrative, with some neatly observant characterizations. A frail southern wife goes reluctantly with her energetic husband to the fabulous run, and stays long enough to help him settle the located land. Loyalty of youth is a keynote.

*A Circle of Trees.* By Dana Faralla. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pa.

Suitable for either adult or adolescent reading. Indian and frontier lore and customs are revitalized through the legends and activities of a kindly and knowledgeable itinerant on the Minnesota prairie. He recognizes and is adept in communicating their universal meanings.

*The Plums Hang High.* By Gertrude E. Finney. Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

From the first paragraph this story holds the attention. A spoiled and unsuspecting daughter of a gentle family in England goes with her gently bred but determined husband to carve out a new and abundant life on American farmland. Innate courage and grit come slowly and painfully to the fore as the family increases amid the toilsome vicissitudes of farm life in the Midwest in the 1860s. The plums hang very high indeed.

*Recollection Creek.* By Fred Gipson. Harper and Brothers, New York.

Not really a novel, though so labeled, but a year-long series of rough-and-tumble escapades into which two Texas boys relentlessly hurl themselves. Full of rowdy humor and tough human touches. Those who remember this author's *Hound Dog Man* will know what is here.

*The Curlew's Cry.* By Mildred Walker. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York.

As usual, Mildred Walker suggests, in or between her lines, certain core significances of the selected region. Here three decades in Montana span the development from vast cattle range to immensely successful dude ranch. It occurs within the lifetime of a girl and young woman whose heart is embedded in the property and who ingeniously does with it what she can when it comes into her hands.

*The Gladesman.* By Delight Youngs. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York.

Brutal as this Gladesman is, the women in his family and connections are disclosed as long-suffering and intrinsically fine. They, rather than he, seem realistically drawn. The scene is the Everglades of today. The descriptions of that unique area are fascinating.

# National Convocation

## on The Church in Town and Country

Theme: *New Horizons for Town and Country Churches*

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Under the Auspices of the Department of Town and Country Church, Division of Home Missions, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI OCTOBER 16-18, 1956

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### General Information

*Who May Attend?* You! If you are interested in the Town and Country Church. Ministers, ministers' wives, lay people, administrators of the church, religious educators, editors, officers of farm and rural community organizations, employees of civic and government agencies—all are invited.

For Hotel reservations, write directly to the hotels listed on this page.

For rooms in homes, make application to your denominational executive of town and country church work.

*Headquarters:*

CENTENARY METHODIST CHURCH

Sixteenth and Pine Streets St. Louis, Missouri

An attendant will be at the registration desk on Monday, October 15, from 4:00 to 8:00 P.M. Tuesday, the registration will begin at 8:00 A.M. and will continue through the Convocation sessions.

To help carry the expense of the Convocation, a registration fee of $2.00 will be charged.

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### Outline of Program

#### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16

Registration—8:00 A.M.

9:00 A.M. Opening General Session. Henry S. Randolph, presiding. Worship Service, Clarence Jordan

9:15 A.M. *A Look at the History of the Town and Country Church Movement*—Mark Rich, Bible College of Missouri

10:45 A.M. Commissions Meet (see list)

LUNCH

2:00 P.M. General Session, Claude Snyder, presiding
*The Agricultural Situation and the Town and Country Church*—Howard Cowden, Consumers Cooperative Association

2:45 P.M. *The Place of the Town and Country Church in the Ecumenical Movement* and
*Some Issues Facing the Town and Country Church Movement*—Mark A. Dawber

3:15 P.M. Discussion of these issues in discussion groups

DINNER

8:00 P.M. General Session, Clifford L. Samuelson, presiding (To be held in the Cathedral)
*Rural World Needs*—David Lindstrom, University of Illinois
*A Report on the European Seminar*
*Recognition of Foreign Students Studying Rural Work in the U.S.A.*

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#### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17

8:45 A.M. General Session, Glenn F. Sanford, presiding
Worship Service, Clarence Jordan

9:15 A.M. *A Dramatic Presentation of the Migrant Program*

9:45 A.M. *The Town and Country Church Utilizing the Resources of Community Organizations* (A Panel Presentation)

10:45 A.M. Commissions Meet (see list)

LUNCH

2:00 P.M. General Session, E. W. Mueller, presiding
*The Implications of the Missouri Rural Church Study for the Town and Country Church Movement*—Lawrence M. Hepple, University of Missouri

3:15 P.M. *The Rural Minister and Community Change*—Samuel W. Blizzard, Pennsylvania State University

3:45 P.M. *Serving Scattered Populations*—Jeanie K. Sherman, Baptist minister in South Dakota

4:30 P.M. Denominational Dinners and Meetings

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#### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18

9:00 A.M. General Session, Dale W. Medearis, presiding
*The Negro at Work*—J. H. Jackson, National Baptist Convention

10:30 A.M. *The Future of the Town and Country Church Movement*—Richard O. Comfort

11:30 A.M. Worship Service, Clarence Jordan

12:00 M. Adjournment

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### COMMISSIONS

*Seminars*

1. *The Church and Agricultural Policy,* Frank S. Miller, University of Missouri
2. *Cooperation of Fringe Churches with Migratory Labor,* Samuel W. Blizzard, Pennsylvania State University
3. *Church Cooperation in the Rural Community,* Henry S. Randolph, Presbyterian U.S.A.
4. *Cooperation with Community Agencies,* Gene Wetherell, Bible College of Missouri

*Discussion Groups*

5. *The Town and Country Church Building,* George P. Kerr, United Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Canon W. Billig, Episcopal Church
6. *Lay Leadership,* Cornelia Russell, The Methodist Church
7. *Church and Community Studies,* Dale W. Medearis, Disciples of Christ
8. *Recruiting and Training,* Calvin Schnucker, Dubuque University
9. *Worship,* Joseph Heartberg, American Baptist Home Mission Society
10. *Ministry to People Over 65 Years of Age,* Benjamin H. Cain, Evangelical United Brethren
11. *Techniques of Evangelism,* E. W. Mueller, National Lutheran Council
12. *Urban-Rural Relations,* E. Colvin Baird, Cumberland Presbyterian Church
13. *Minister and the Productive Homestead,* John Philbrick, Protestant Episcopal Church
14. *Sparse and Scattered Populations,* Clayton Pepper, American Baptist
15. *Theology and Rural Life,* Wesley A. Hotchkiss, Congregational Christian Churches
16. *The Town and Country Commission on the State Level,* Francis Allison, Protestant Episcopal Church

*Workshop*

17. *Communications,* Everett Parker, Congregational Christian Churches

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### SAINT LOUIS HOTELS

Claridge Hotel ..... Locust at 18th Street
Warwick Hotel ..... Locust at 15th Street
Jefferson Hotel ..... Locust at 12th Street